

Message Text

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46

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 1745

FOR GOWEN ARA/CEN

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT NU

SUBJECT: DETENTION OF COMMUNIST LABOR LEADER

1. EMB CAN CONFIRM REPORT ON PROLONGED DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGES OF DOMINGO SANCHEZ SALGADO (CHAQUITILLO) COMMUNIST LEADER OF THE INDEPENDENT GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF WORKERS (CGT-I). HE APPARENTLY WAS ARRESTED IN JULY OR AUGUST 1975 WHEN RETURNING FROM OUTSIDE NICARAGUA AND RELEASED IN JANUARY 1976.

2. PRESIDENTIAL PRESS OFFICE HAS THIS WEEK DISTRIBUTED A SLEEK 52-PAGE DOCUMENT TITLED "THE TRUTH ABOUT THE DECLARATIONS OF DR. PEDRO J. CHAMORRO AT THE INTER-AMERICAN PRESS SOCIETY MEETING IN SAO PAULO" (POUCHED), WHICH SEEKS TO EXPLAIN AND REFUTE EACH ALLEGATION MADE BY CHAMORRO REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. THE CASE OF SANCHEZ IS TREATED FOR THE FIRST TIME PUBLICLY THEREIN, NOTING THAT SEVERAL PERSONS WERE DETAINED FOR RETURNING TO NICARAGUA AFTER A SUSPECTED UNAUTHORIZED TRIP TO A

COMMUNIST COUNTRY. ALL WERE DEPORTED OR RELEASED EXCEPT SANCHEZ "WHO WAS GIVEN A 180-DAY SENTENCE BY A POLICE MAGISTRATE BECAUSE HE IS A KNOWN COMMUNIST AGITATOR." A RELIABLE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCE IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY REVEALED TO POLOFF IN
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JANUARY THAT SANCHEZ WAS IMPRISONED AT BEHEST OF PRI-

VATE CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES WHO FEARED HIS LEADERSHIP DURING NEW CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH SCAAS, THE COMMUNIST-LED CONSTRUCTION WORKERS' UNION.

3. SANCHEZ' INCARCERATION WAS UNKNOWN TO EMB INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS UNTIL JUST BEFORE HIS RELEASE IN JANUARY. WE SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNED THAT SANCHEZ HIMSELF GAVE WORD TO NICARAGUAN SOCIALIST PARTY (PSN) TO SOFT PEDAL DETENTION IN BELIEF THAT NOTHING COULD BE DONE TO FREE HIM AND NO POLITICAL MILEAGE COULD BE GAINED FROM SITUATION BECAUSE OF CENSORSHIP. THE PROBLEM OF ARBITRARY DETENTION OF COMMUNIST LEADERS, IF NOT THE SPECIFIC SANCHEZ CASE, WAS TREATED IN EMB'S ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT.

4. EMB REGRETS THAT ITS BELATED DISCOVERY OF SANCHEZ CASE MIGHT HAVE MISLED ARA/CEN IN ITS RESPONSE TO CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY. TRUST DEPT. APPRECIATES EXTREME DIFFICULTY OF OBTAINING ACCURATE INFORMATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS OF THIS NATURE BECAUSE OF CENSORSHIP AND RELUCTANCE OF GON INTELLIGENCE SERVICES TO INFORM US FULLY. THE DIFFICULTY WE HAVE RECENTLY HAD IN ATTEMPTING TO CONFIRM WITH GON CAPTURE OF FSLN URBAN COMMAND LEADER TOMAS BORGE FURTHER ILLUSTRATES THE LATTER PROBLEM.
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